

XXV.

24.

# FUNERAL SERMON

ON THE OCCASION OF THE DEATH OF THE

## HON. DAVID JOHNSON,

PREACHED AT LIMESTONE SPRINGS AND AT UNIONVILLE S. C., IN  
MARCH AND APRIL, 1855, AT THE REQUEST RESPECTIVELY  
OF THE EXECUTORS OF THE LATE GOVERNOR, AND  
OF A COMMITTEE OF HIS UNION FRIENDS,

BY THOMAS CURTIS, D. D.

~~~~~  
"There must be Wisdom with great Death!"  
TENNISON.—*In Memoriam.*  
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THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

By CHARLES A. BEAMAN, D.D., LL.D., President of the University of Michigan

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## CORRESPONDENCE.

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UNIONVILLE, S. C., May 2d, 1855.

REV. THOMAS CURTIS, D.D.

Dear Sir: At a meeting of the Joint Committee on the part of the citizens of this District, Johnson Riflemen, and Union Lodge No. 75 A. F. M., the following Resolutions were unanimously adopted:

“*Resolved*, That the sincere thanks of this Committee be returned to Rev. Dr. Curtis, for the very able funeral discourse delivered by him to the late Governor Johnson at their request, on Sabbath the 29th ult.

“*Resolved*, That a Committee of Three be appointed to wait on Dr. Curtis, and solicit a copy of the same for publication.”

In accordance with the above Resolutions, and expressing our individual wishes, we earnestly request your discourse for publication.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

D. GOUDELOCK,

S. R. GIST,

ISAAC G. MCKISSICK,

*Committee.*

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LIMESTONE SPRINGS, May 10th, 1855.

To D. GOUDELOCK, S. R. GIST, I. G. MCKISSICK, ESQR'S, JOINT COMMITTEE:

I received with pleasure your kind notice of my late Discourse at Union; and will prepare a copy immediately for press. Some of Governor Johnson's friends are anxious for *all* the public tributes to his memory to be collected and printed together. I do not know how this might comport with your views; but if some arrangement of that kind is not speedily made, I will forward to you the copy you request; and remain, yours respectfully,

THOS. CURTIS.

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## S E R M O N .

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So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.—  
Ps. xc. 12.

EVERY man of good sense and common observation must know the last twelve months to have been remarkable for the ravages of death. The war raging in Europe, the storms and loss of vessels on the ocean, the pestilence “walking in darkness and wasting at noonday” on the shores of our own State, have cut off their thousands and tens of thousands—the old and young; the brave, the useful, and the pious! But I do not know that, on the whole, a single death has occurred, more interesting in the lessons it may afford, (especially to us,) than that of the truly great and amiable man, our late Governor and neighbor. It brings its lessons, in every view of them, home to our doors, and our hearts.

Since his death, I have been sometimes thinking at Limestone,—Why he came among us to die? Why, rather, he was sent there by Him who disposeth finally, both our minds and our affairs—where, no great attractions of general society could invite him; where many men, perhaps most, of his former habits, would have found our retirement an unbearable solitude, a death to the world before their time? We are all too short-sighted to answer this question fully. But our text may suggest one or two useful replies. He came to us, as Providence designed, that in the repose of age, every part of his character might be reviewed by him; his falling robes (so to speak), be adjusted and re-adjusted, as in the mirror of God’s truth it should seem needful! That, dying at a distance from the scenes in which he was once so active, he might better appreciate them, and others him. Both issues were, I believed, measurably obtained! In a word, he came to us for a particular opportunity to “number” his own “days,” while yet he lived; and he came, in his death, to “teach us to number ours, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.” He was a wise man, by universal admission, in all other things; but he lived to feel this, a religious wisdom, “the main thing,” as he called it; and we shall be more blame-worthy than he, if over such a grave, we cannot learn important and impressive lessons respecting this thing.

While others, then, well qualified, have called attention and will again call it—to his former public life, I shall confine myself somewhat strictly, on this occasion, to what I am called upon for—the religious lessons of his later days;—in the language of those friends who requested this service,—those which respect “his duty to God and the forgiveness of his sins.”

I shall not consider this the place, or the occasion for Eulogy. We do not, or ought not, to meet in God’s house, at any time, simply for the purpose of shewing our respect for man, living or dead. My duty is—the spiritual service of the living. We can in no way serve or soothe the dead on these occasions. The notion is not Protestant. But the occasion may be used for two good purposes—to impress a suitable portion of God’s word, and to exhibit (apart as far as possible from all worldly considerations) such features of a deceased friend’s character as bore more particularly on the world to come. In all characters there are such features; and I pray God to aid, while, with all frankness and delicacy, we endeavor to select them here.

God speaks loudly to the living, in such events as these, by His servant and messenger, Death. They are especially meant to call our attention from the small concerns of life—the littleness of its great things, and the folly of its wisdom—to our unbounded interests in eternity. Will you hear? They are meant to call attention to the *neglected truths* of His Word. Men have sometimes been roused by these events, who have been habitually neglectful of all other means of leading them to the “great salvation.” Are there any such here to-day? I beseech you then—now, to listen!

I take a text that contains a prayer, suitable to all my hearers. That each of us, as a rational and responsible being, may appropriate and apply, now! The whole Psalm belongs to our race. Old as Moses, it has nothing obsolete or temporary about it. It speaks of God and man in their essential difference—their close relations. Not of this man or that; this generation or that, but of “all generations.” Not of any particular nation, church, or order of men, but of man and his mortality, as all know and so few feel it; man and his short time here, as all may perceive it, but will not;—man and his “iniquities” which he so rarely confesses and forsakes, and therefore is so seldom forgiven. It is full of the most striking illustrations of all these things. As to the manner, for instance, in which the masses die, and as to how the mass, or multitude, of men, may be morally described while living. In one verse we have the three remarkable metaphors of a flood, a sleep, the grass of the morning, growing up, to be cut down and wither at night. “Thou

carriest them away as with a flood"—unexpectedly, irresistibly; no warning being given sometimes, or when given, not taken. Its force accumulating out of sight, then sweeping every thing before it. Such is the death of the masses, the majority. Then "they" are personally described "as a sleep." Insensible though alive, dead for the time to all activity and all duty. This describes the living multitudes. "Dead in trespasses and sins," they pass, how often, their whole time here! And through the very gates of literal death—having only the carcase, or shell of a soul; no proper use or knowledge of its living, waking and immortal powers. "As grass;"—at the best frail as beautiful, growing up only for the mower's scythe;—then, by sure laws, fading, falling, withering. How small the space of time between the green blade dropping with morning dew—(a lesson for the young particularly)—and the hay and stubble of the field, in which it ends! We cannot further pursue these instructive pictures; but you may see, and should feel, them every day.

Briefly to dispose of the instruction of the text I now inquire,

I. WHAT *is it to number our days?*

II. WHY *we should number them?*

Then apply the whole to the occasion.

And it is—1. To believe that they *are numerable*; have a number; a limit that no man shall pass; a definite number though we cannot define it. This is common sense and Scriptural sense—a thought often repeated in Scripture. Yet how few practically believe, or act as if they believed, it. The multitude have no impression that their days are or could be numbered anywhere; no *belief* that an archangel could do this—or God himself! And whoever began to "number" that of which he thought thus! Things of which his chief impression was that they were innumerable? The sands of the sea shore, for instance, or the rain-drops of a heavy shower!

If Scripture did not tell us that it is "appointed unto men once to die," and therefore that to a fixed limit of life all must come, common observation would tell us so; every page of human history, and the history of every family and class of men; the stones and fences, and reproachful fragments, of every grave-yard! Yet men act as if no such thing were "appointed;" or were at all to be thought of! No such thing is thought of by the masses. "Their inward thought is," says this same Psalmist "that their houses shall be forever." Death is not in all, or any, of their thoughts, for God is not in any of them. Of the steady, sure approach of this enemy from day to day, they have neither hope nor fear. They do not feel him nearer to-day than yester-

day. Men just act as if never to die—the very men, as a class, who thus acting, are doomed to die forever—must die eternally (thus wholly slighting death) as sure as God lives, for He hath said it.

Scripture dwells on this thought—“an appointed time for man upon earth;” “bounds set, that he cannot pass,” “his days as those of an hireling,” or hired servant—twice told, you know, at least, and accurately, by those concerned—(him who lets and him who hires) or how could the hire be paid? And while we are mercifully left uncertain as to their number, and as free to act as if they had no number, the Infinite God could not be Supreme over all and wise without mistake, if with Him all were not accurately estimated—in the future, as well as in the past. Be assured, if “the hairs of your head are all numbered” by Him, the days of our life are; and to live under the consciousness, the deep sense of this, is alike rational and consoling. It keeps God nigh us, consciously, as he ever should be, and Death no nearer than it ought to be. Job had learned this consoling arithmetic, when he said, “All the days of my appointed time will I wait, until my change come.” To speak of a great and good God, without a divine Providence, embracing all events, (small and large as we call them,) or even of a general, without a particular, Providence, is like speaking of a great and good physician, who should care nothing about the drams, scruples, or grains of his medicines, but only about the ounces and pounds. God knows all these things, and thus guides and secures His own government over all! He does not make them known to us, and thus our freedom, our responsibility and our submission to that government are secured. This doctrine is too important, not to bear some repetition.

Did not His eye rule all things, and intend  
The least of our concerns—since from the least  
The greatest oft originate!—Could chance  
Find place in His dominion, or dispose  
One lawless particle to thwart His plan,  
Then God might be surprised, and unforeseen  
Contingence might alarm Him, and disturb  
The smooth and equal course of His affairs.

Contrast for a moment, this patient, hopeful waiting on God in all our numbered days, with the sheer moral madness to which infidelity may push men. A distinguished modern infidel could be named (I knew him personally, but he is gone to his account) who had so cherished an insane belief, not only that death was a mere sleep, but that with a strong resolution it might be indefinitely postponed, that he was known to stand by the sick bed of his wife, exclaiming, “Mary,



do not die. You know we have been convinced that we need not, if strongly resolved against it. Dear Mary, do not die." But die she did and in that sickness too. Wretched spiritual fools! Yet both were authors of talent, and stood comparatively well in society. Or, contrast a proper preparation for death with the cold, not to say criminal, consolation of the world's greatest man of modern times. Las Casas tells us, that Napoleon would complain, at St. Helena, of his constitution sometimes; which though vigorous, occasionally exposed him to fits of indisposition. "He however, consoled himself with the thought," says his biographer, "that if, in imitation of the ancients, he should ever feel inclined to escape from the disgusts and vexations of life, his moral opinions were *not of a nature to prevent him*"\*—In other words, his highest moral comfort was—the physical facility of becoming a suicide.

To number our days, is—2d. To *believe that number*, with regard to the longest lives comparatively *small*—the longest life short, as compared with the high and great purposes for which life is given. Our days "few" as evil; as "an hand breadth;" as "nothing," before the Eternal One, or as contrasted with eternity.—Do you dodge, now, to an opposite extreme from the infidel cases just described, and say, "Admitted! We all know the shortness of life and time. It is true to a proverb." Aye, but we still doubt its being true enough with you; with conscience, your "inward thoughts," your personal feelings, motives and actions—to answer any good moral purpose. The lips often cheat the mind here; our own minds as well as those of others. We confess the shortness of life, as a whole, because we will not be troubled with considering it in its parts and daily passage. Just as a profligate youth will spend money as a whole, now gamble it, perhaps, and now give it away, because he never knew the value of a dollar. Nay, it is further and most remarkably a fact, that men will not meditate upon the shortness of their time here, just because they have a general impression that it is short; and because that general impression is the most disagreeable one which they have about it. The "general impression" actually bars off all particular, or useful impressions.

St. Paul puts this wholesale confession to the test, cuts it up into profitable details and consequences, when he says, "The time being short, it remaineth," or naturally results, that all the ties and pursuits of time should have only their proportionate attention, their proper hold upon us. By strong implication he teaches, that we Christians think

\*Las Casas' Memoirs, v. i. p. 195.

too much, believe too much, of the length and strength of domestic ties; of the joys and sorrows of earth; its business and its possessions; all the worldly uses of worldly things, to be always sincere in this confession. Or, that, in a proper view and application of this trite truism—the time is short (and, as compared with the claims of God and eternity, upon us) “they who have wives should be [more] as though they had none; they who weep as though they wept not; they who rejoice as though they rejoiced not; they who buy as though they possessed not; they who use this world as not abusing it:” Can we bear this test? This trial of the daily uses we make of time? Until this tone of mind is produced by it, he seems to say, we do not believe that the time is short; or in the language of the Text, “number our days” as few!

3d. It is, again: *To believe in the swiftness of their flight*, and to measure this carefully by the results.

They are said to be “swifter than a post,” or the swiftest mode of sending letters or messages across a country; to pass—“as the swift ships,” or “as the eagle hasteth to its prey”—“swifter than a weaver’s shuttle.” Some of these involve a swiftness which the eye cannot follow. Did you ever see distinctly the spokes of a carriage wheel travelling post haste? Or tell how often the wheels of a steam-car revolve, or how rapidly either the ship cleaves the ocean, or the strong-winged bird the air—until you come coolly to understand and measure out the distance travelled? But then, if you are mathematical at all, you may measure the evolutions performed, in each case, and tell their exact number. Such are our days on earth, swift in their flight beyond distinct perception; swift to utter imperceptibleness—only to be numbered by sitting down coolly and meditatively, from time to time, to see how far we have come onward. From childhood to youth; youth to middle age, as it may be; or from middle life to old age. But how many neglect to do this all their days. “Gray hairs are upon them here and there, but they know it not.” There “is but a step between them and death,” and they are the last to perceive it; are offended and irritated, perhaps, to be told of it. But the facts are still stubborn; the results prove how far they have come along. How often the whirling days have gone round.

And so with that other beautiful and instructive metaphor—the weaver’s shuttle! How swift it flies from his hand, and glides in and out of his work, and threads the warp with the woof, so that your eye can scarcely follow it as it leaps along! But the work, the work done at night, proves that he has been throwing it all day. And thus, to

change a little the application of the metaphor—thus, be our days thrown into our proper work, as responsible creatures; and then, swift as they are, when all is done and done with us here, there shall come forth a garment of honor and beauty for our souls. Devote them to useful toils and pursuits for this world and another; keep but the most useful and important things in their proper places (as the humblest mechanic, weaver or otherwise, keeps all his tools) and you shall be in the spirit of our divine Master and pattern. “I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work;” and your “setting sun” shall

“Leave a track of glory in the skies.”

For the purpose and end of all this is, a certain heart-work here mentioned, “That we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”

II. The “heart” of man, to be as brief as possible here, includes, in the full Scriptural meaning of it, all his inward powers. His understanding and judgment; his desires and affections, (very prominently and particularly)—his conscience; his imagination and passions. It distinguishes him, therefore, not only from all God’s other creatures, animate and inanimate, here on earth, but, so far as we know them, from the angels of heaven. Other earthly animals have comparatively, “no understanding,”—the angels none of our passions or affections. But the human heart, as treated in Scripture, unites all these! It places man, therefore, purified and holy man; man imbued with the Spirit of the Son of man (as also the Son of God) in relative superiority to every other creature, intelligent or otherwise, in God’s universe. A wicked heart degrades him, in ingratitude and vileness, below the angels that sinned; a pure and sanctified heart elevates him to a moral position of which it is written—“that now, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places (or to the angels) may be known, by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God.”

Religious wisdom (for I will not stop here to apply the term to any thing else) includes all that can be known by creatures, of this high and wonderful attribute of God—the wisdom that laid the foundations of the earth; garnished the heavens; poured out the waters of the sea and “gave to the deep its decree, that those waters should not pass His commandment”—the wisdom that now rules the world by an Omniscient and Omnipotent Providence—that became incarnate in our Saviour, Christ, and has its highest honors in the grace of the Gospel. To all this wisdom as an object, it is the prayer of our Text that we may be so taught to number our days, as to apply our hearts.

And what is this application of the heart to God's wisdom? It is, with an enlightened understanding, to search until we find, and form a solid judgment of our own (as our Lord exhorts) of "the things that are right." Right, not according merely to any human standard of right and wrong, but according to God's standard, God's revealed will. It is under the Divine teaching here implored (and to the humble applicant for it never refused) to devote all the inward powers—prayerfully, patiently, and perseveringly, to the knowledge of God in Christ. And thus come we to know God in His Law given; its righteousness, equity, suitableness to man; its perfect "goodness"—in His Law broken by the first man, by all men, and particularly by ourselves—broken wilfully, in the face of light and against light, until our sins against the Divine goodness break the heart of stone within, and melt us into genuine and deep Repentance. And now, we come to know God in His Law satisfied, magnified and made more than ever to be honored, in the atonement wrought out by the sufferings and death of Christ. God's righteousness, without deeds of the law, we come to know; but witnessed attested as such, by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God by faith in Christ—a faith that works by love and is by works made manifest.

Such are the foot-prints of every child of God in the narrow but sure way of obtaining saving knowledge; or applying his heart to saving wisdom. There are no two ways of attaining this object—any more than there are two names given under heaven whereby we must be saved! And, strange as it may sound to some, we find nothing worth calling two opinions about this matter among Experimental Christians—I mean, either as to what is a true application of the heart to God's wisdom, or its sure results, a true Repentance and saving Faith. About much besides we differ,—ordinances, church government, the ministry, and many moral and religious details; but here are such Christians (thank God) unanimous; and this is the substance of the Gospel. The truth and the love of the truth, whereby any man, by God's grace may be saved—saving truth, as made known that it may be loved; and loved when known, that we may be saved by it.

The proper numbering of our days, or a due feeling of our mortality, greatly promotes this application of the heart to the truth, because it forbids all trifling, all false excuses, all resigning worldliness; all delays. We never seek salvation as sinful men until we seek it as dying men. The two feelings interpenetrate; blend and mingle, and daily strengthen each other. *I must pass* the great gulf between a forgiven and an unforgiven sinner here, and now (is the true issue of these feelings) or,

knowing not what a day may bring forth, I may be in the gulf of perdition to-morrow. The sceptre of mercy, boundless mercy, is extended to me to-day,—I must touch it and live. It may be withdrawn to-morrow if I delay; or exchanged for the sceptre of strict justice—the sword that turns every way to punish the obdurate sinner—and I cannot risk the exchange!

It is this heart-application to wisdom, that we all so much want; the whole man made wise unto salvation; and his affections, especially (which the Scripture term, as we have seen, particularly means) his whole affections imbued and occupied with it. “With the heart man believeth unto righteousness.”

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Every part of these plain views of the Gospel is connected with the moral and religious history of our departed Friend.

He was the son of an obscure, but sound and faithful Minister of the Gospel, a Baptist preacher, who came into this State from Virginia, sixty-six years ago. In that State our Friend was born in 1782. It was late in life that his father was called into the Ministry, which he exercised but a few years (not more than eight or nine) and in one neighborhood, only or chiefly, that of the Philadelphia Church, near Glenn Springs.

Although this his pious parentage was not (as he would tell you if he were here) sufficiently valued, it was never wholly forgotten by our Friend, during his long life, nor in some of the most flattering parts of it. During his retirement at Limestone, he would frequently recur to it with satisfaction. His father never had half the natural abilities, I believe, nor half the mental culture, or the general acceptance with society, of the son. But the father's principles as I also believe, gave an humble hope of salvation to the son—saved the son, I trust—when all other hope was extinguished within him. I have examined those principles as they appear upon record in the Church book, and form the Reverend Mr. Johnson's Confession of Faith, at his Ordination. They are still those of the Baptist order of this State. I came direct to him once, from devoting an evening to the examination of that book, and much pleased my Friend by telling him how acceptably his venerated parent preached and acted upon them to the last. He would at such times produce his father's old Bible. Frequently have we read and prayed over it together. And do you not know, Christian parents, that the father, as a pious man, must often have prayed for this son, fifty years ago; and that this is not too long for parental prayers to preserve

their life, as seeds of hope—and bear some fruit, as I trust to show you these did?

A remarkable instance of the vitality of prayer, and of the long-continued influence of a single earnest prayer, occurred, as I was lately informed, in the life of our Friend. While he was a boy, some of his father's horses had strayed into the mountains as far as the neighborhood of Howard's Gap, and having followed them thither, he was assisted in recovering them by a pious Presbyterian farmer. The farmer took him home, gave him the shelter of his house for the night, which he closed with family prayer; and particularly implored a blessing upon the "young stranger"—"that God would prosper him in his way, and smile upon his future life." After he had been a short time on the Bench and was holding the Court at Greenville, an elderly man, pressed toward him in the village to shake hands,—and asked if he remembered the old farmer who prayed for him when a boy? "Oh, yes"—said he; and to the friend who gave me this anecdote, added, "that the substance of this prayer had never, during his long life, departed from his mind." It should be added, that his mother was a woman of ardent piety and considerably strength of mind—who is known to have expressed her hope that "her son David would some day become a good man." He had not, then, wholly to learn the truths of the Gospel, as such, when most he needed them. This he owed clearly to his early and hereditary impressions. The gospel light of his youth, which shone far too faintly in his manhood, gleamed out successfully and invaluablely in his latest days.

I have said, that in the most flattering parts of his life his parents were not forgotten. It was out of his first earnings, on being called to the Bar, that he went into the neighborhood of the Philadelphia Church and discharged a few debts which his father had left unpaid. But I was particularly pleased to hear there—not from his wealthy connexions but from some of the humbler parties concerned—that while he was Governor, he would sometimes take a respectable friend or two to see a poor sister of his father's flock (Judge Harper and another friend on one occasion) and show them the cottage and kitchen of this good Betty Somebody, as those of "a cleanly Christian of his father's Church." And that he never went into that neighborhood without paying her a visit.

He was a man who, speaking as it regards other men, achieved for himself a high standing in the community. Speaking religiously, and truly, one whom God in His providence favored with powers of mind naturally of a high order, and which were cultivated, considering his

opportunities with signal success—the private school of a worthy Presbyterian minister, in the neighborhood of Union, affording him his only, or principal education. He spoke in his last illness of being particularly “thankful for the sincere friends God had given him throughout life.”—For, as he never made an enemy, he never forgot a friend. The correctness of his opinions and the weight of his judgment as a lawyer, carried him to the Bench; his long sustained respectability and integrity on the Bench, to the Chief Magistracy of the State. South Carolina could give him no higher tokens of the universal respect and esteem in which he was held.

All this has been well and eloquently attested both by the Bench and the Bar, within these few weeks; but he has claims to be remembered as a great man in one view of greatness that I have not seen brought out with sufficient distinctness; and which is of some importance to impress on the ambitious young. It was the greatness of a mind well balanced. Not so much remarkable for the commanding character of any one, or more, of its powers, or attainments, as for the harmony, the homogenousness and symmetry of the whole. A greatness to which all his powers in their places contributed; and in the attainment of which all his opportunities were improved. I need not remind some of you that this was the characteristic of America’s greatest man!

He was a true friend, a strong and steady friend, within that particular circle to which every man must sooner or later, confine that term, who knows its meaning;—but remarkable also for a general friendliness and amenity of disposition which made words and deeds of kindness appear the only ones natural to him. “In his tongue was the law of kindness”—no other law (able lawyer as all agree that he was) certainly no other more truly or familiarly there. He was among the youngest and most cheerful of old men, I ever knew; the particular friend and patron of the young, to his latest days.

Of his claims upon our Limestone Springs Institution to affectionate remembrance and pre-eminent respect (for we owe to no single friend so much of those feelings) I cannot trust myself to say much. (An oppressive weight rests on the heart on these occasions, and benumbs, in measure, all one’s powers.) He might be called more than any other friend, *Pater Institutionis*, the Father of the Institution. He encouraged us to begin; he cheered us on from year to year, with his presence and his noble smile; he spoke for us; he wrote for us; he counselled with us. He examined our compositions, and awarded our honors, and presided at our Commencements, with a ready mind, a full heart, and a happy dignity. Our Sabbath worship he attended so long

as he was in health; at his table we were, young and old, always welcome; on an errand of hospitality for us, he ventured out into the dark night, and incurred a serious personal injury which he carried with him to the grave. Long shall we

“Miss him from the accustomed hill”

of his residence; but my own most cherished recollection of him will be—now sitting in manly, aged repose of character, as a hearer of the Gospel; and now, in friendly greetings, mingling the dignity of that repose with the brightness and sweetness of those Female Youth, who would pass him, as they retired from Worship. Inspiration thus brings together these interesting extremes of life—its setting and its rising sun-light, so to speak—when it calls on “young men and maidens, old men and children” to “praise the Lord.” Here we saw this—as we shall see it no more!

It would not be just, even in this sketch, to omit saying, He was an independent man, both in the formation of his opinions and the avowal of them. It was a part of his moral character and influence—was connected with the truthfulness of his character, and his remarkable love of truth, in his dealings with all men and all earthly subjects. His own opinions he had and held, upon all the much agitated questions of his day; and for some of them he suffered somewhat. I shall here say no more than this—which I had the opportunity to know.—In none of them was he ultra, fanatical, or merely sectional; in all conservative, honest, and therefore willing to believe others honest—warmly South Carolinian, steadily American. He reminded me much, sometimes, of what was said of the English Charles Fox—“He had no corners in his mind,” nor

“To party gave up what was meant for mankind.”

He was one of our few public men, therefore, who was able to wait for a true public opinion; and who did not mistake for it, much less was to be borne down by, a momentary popular clamour.

He felt while Governor, the high responsibility of the Pardoning Power; and I have not heard of an objection to the manner of its being exercised by him in a single case. He was never inclined to go behind the finding of a Jury, or the sentence of a Judge, in open court, and spoke of the advantages for establishing truth and justice *there*, as in no other way to be obtained. He saw how easily this power might



be perverted to political and other purposes; and never would exercise it upon an *exparte* view of any case.

He was, finally, an humbled, and we trust a penitent man; a sincere, if trembling, believer in the only Saviour.

In his last illness he called to my recollection a conversation between us, some two years ago, in which he had expressed sceptical feelings—"great difficulties," as he said, which he had on two points—the spirituality of God, and the doctrine of the Trinity. I will not detain you to state how these were dealt with at the time—further than, in justice to Robert Hall, to say, that I sent him that great writer's able Sermon on the first of these subjects. We afterwards read together and prayed over the fourteenth Chapter of St. John's Gospel. He appeared to be satisfied, and said, he saw one thing very clearly—"That God would cease to be God, when no longer mysterious to us; or if we could fully comprehend Him."

He reminded me of these topics, this last time with great animation. "He had often been thinking of them while he lay there." "Light had broken in upon him" he said—"on reflecting upon them, as from behind a black cloud"—"light from heaven" repeating his metaphor, "as from behind a black cloud." As to the Trinity, he thought he saw now that it might be stated thus—"Not as a rigid personality that might end in separability or actual separation, like your person and mine; but that which became known to us in a personal, joint-work for man's redemption." And then, he said "it is a glorious doctrine."

He spoke, on my return from a short absence of the great affliction he found in that frequent state of stupor, in which some of you know he passed his latest weeks of life. But that at one short season both this and his fever left him—"when I poured out my whole soul," said he, "to my Maker: from the bottom of my heart thanked Him for all His great mercy to me; and was exceedingly happy at that time." (I try to give you his exact words; his earnest manner never can be given.)

He woke up at another time saying solemnly—"Lord save or I perish." At another "I do love the Christian people." Again—"I have not been unprofited by the dreary road, the dreary road through which I have travelled—and I have not forgotten the main thing."..... "Here I lie," he said at a later period, "a poor sinful worm, but not without hope—not without hope."

During all his last sickness, particularly, (but it was also the case on former occasions,) he sought eagerly the services both of my dear Son and myself to read and pray with him; said of those services much more than they deserved, and what is only alluded to here to show the

state of his mind. Never were Ministers of the Gospel treated with more affectionate respect. At our last joint interview with him, he stretched out his hand to gather our hands into it, and saying nothing, pressed them between his own. He expressed to each of us, more than once his wish for some hours' conversation, as to the whole state and history of his religious feelings; and his deep regret that his mind was too weak for this. On my Son's pointing to the necessity—not of forms or ceremonies at such a season—but of true spirituality of mind, and observing that with regard to this, the Spirit of God was said to help our infirmities, he emphatically said, "I know it, I know it," squeezing his hand.

He did love the people of God.....entered with a liberality, which his purse often attested, into all our plans for diffusing the light of the Gospel in the neighborhood; and once made a reply to me on this subject which I cannot forget. He was told of one of our back-woods Church meetings. I came from it a little disturbed with something that occurred, and said, he ought to have been there to help me. His reply was made more solemnly than my remark. "Would to God," said he, with tears in his eyes, "that I were worthy." I believed this to be then, as I still believe it, a most humble and heaven-heard prayer.

————— I have felt my duty in this case, Christian friends and neighbors, to be one of extreme delicacy; but am well assured that I do not mistake it, when I make, as I stated in the opening, the spiritual service of the living my leading object. There are lessons then of warning about the case which must not be wholly omitted. It speaks loudly of the evils of procrastination in religion—until age, a sick bed, or a death-bed, may becloud and incapacitate the mind. Nor less does it preach, with trumpet-tongue, of the inveteracy of those evil habits that will always in such cases be formed. Habits such as will eventually mingle their dark shades with the brightest hopes, that can then be entertained, either by our friends or of them! It is well known to many of you that my own convictions are on the side of hope, with regard to this dear friend's final state of mind; or that his characteristic sins were mercifully forgiven. Nor can I fairly be supposed to allude to them and their long continuance here, but—most unwillingly—but in sorrow—and as, in truth, the deepest reasons for mourning that I can feel, over such a man's grave.

And now if I can command sufficient composure, I wish to imagine *him* to conclude this service. I would avail myself of having known him spiritually as well, at least, as any surviving friend, and say—Consider him here, now! And could his venerable form, his benign

countenance, his whole majestic and affectionate manner be renewed to us on the spot—in the pulpit where I now stand. What would he say? To you, his children, you some of his most intimate friends; you his respected neighbors; or to you, Young People, many of whom he has so often taken by the hand, and looked so willing to do you any kindness possible to him?—What, as a last kindness, would he now say to you—to all?

Something like this—I think!—“I attained, by God’s blessing, a hale and hopeful manhood half a century ago. I was of firm and strong health; of hard-working mind, and of sufficient attainments to succeed in all I undertook. I was cheered on by my neighbors, my associates, my State and country. Step by step, I was permitted to advance in social position, beyond my claims and expectations; so rare a lot, when what youth expects is considered. But all that the most aspiring member of my profession, could then or now, desire, I attained. The law gave me all its honors; the State all her honors. My competitors made way for me, without envy or jealousy; my associates accorded to me respect; intelligent and unreserved deference;—my country, fame. Some of the patriarch’s language I could adopt. ‘When I went out to the gate, or judgment seat, the young men gave way, and the aged men stood up. Unto me men gave ear, and waited and kept silence at my counsel. After my words they spake not again, and my speech dropped upon them. I chose out their way and sat chief.’

“Such were my honors. Where are they now! With my head beneath God’s footstool, beneath the pathway of the humblest servant passing by—corruption and the worm my companions.

“As a man I had to die. And painful and bitter with bodily suffering, was my passage to the grave. What are honors; what is gaiety; what self-indulgence of body or mind where, either my dissolving frame or my trembling spirit abides? Objects of regret and repentance all, when sought only for themselves; of sorrow and loathing, when not restrained by the fear of God. Supposing my life to be lived again, while I might not be less thankful for the honors fairly won of man, I had sought more the honor that cometh from God only; had sought His honor more; loved Him more!

“As a sinful man I had to die. God’s faithful word humbled me, crushed me as to all help or hope from creatures, in a dying hour. But I could breathe of hope at last; a feeble, trembling, but real hope in a great Redeemer’s work, a glorious Trinity’s work for my poor soul’s redemption. I was told and I believed, that the blood of Jesus Christ

cleanseth from all sin! In the eleventh hour to have had this hope was worth more to me than all I had, or hoped for before! But trust none of you to the eleventh hour, as an opportunity for salvation; for the last opportunity may be a lost one, if mine was not"—

No further seek his merits to disclose,  
Nor draw his frailties from their dread abode;  
(There they alike in trembling hope repose)—  
The bosom of his Father and his God.



